

## William Cocke to Andrew Jackson, November 9, 1797, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO WILLIAM COCKE.

November 9, 1797

S'r , When I last saw you I conceived that the first letter you wd. receive from me wd. be a letter of friendship but sir some recent information of your extraordinary conduct compels me to make use of the language of reproach.

Your sacrificing all private confidence by making publick my private letter merits and receives my utmost indignation, Sir the baseness of your heart in violating a confidenc[e] reposed in you in an hour of intimate friendship, should<sup>1</sup> as I conceived it was between you and me, by the most solemn obligation will bring down the indignation of the thinking part of mankind upon you and the thunderbolt you were preparing for me will burst upon your own head, it will occasion that part of mankind, that heretofore view'd you worthy of publick confidence to pause a moment and reflect how far a man is worthy of publick confidence who has violated all kind of *private* at the Shrine of malice occasioned by goaded disappointment, the Western world will think for themselves like freemen as they are and view the man who has made such sacrifice as you have done, capable of betraying all publick confidence to private interest.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Should" is clearly the reading of the manuscript, but one would think "sealed" was intended.

<sup>2</sup> No evidence has been found showing the basis of this quarrel. The letter was written while Jackson was on his way to Philadelphia to take his seat in the United States Senate.

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A week earlier he was at Knoxville. This writing illustrates his great sensitiveness. He was never a man to adjust a quarrel in which he was one of the principal parties. The sequel was a challenge, issued June 24, 1798, *q. v.*

I wish not to inquire into the motives of your conduct, it is enough for me to know the baseness of a mind, that could under any pretext whatever violate a confidence that under the banners of a close and intimate friendship was reposed in him.

It will not palliate the crime there being nothing in the letter that was necessary to be kept sacred, your intentions were as criminal as tho it had contained treason. your object must have been to have made use of it to my injury and that in an ungentlemanlike manner, but sir as you have step'd forward to injure me in the publick mind, you will pardon me for also stepping forward, and pronouncing to the World the act you have been guilty of and then the world may judge between you and me, you will also pardon me for retracting, that good opinion that I publicly expressed of your publick conduct when I now am convinced, that all your publick acts that I heretofore thought were bottom'd on publick good, were founded on the broad basis of private Interest and *popularity* and I am supported in this opinion by *your* late conduct, *by your stepping forward to raise your own popularity, by sacrificing your private confidence* , by which means you thought to destroy mine.

Sir your conduct in shewing my letter to your greatest Enemy, a man whom you view'd with contempt and calumniated in the bitterness of your Soul when with me in Philadelphia last in order to reconcile him to you and bring him over to your party adds still to your disgrace and he must deprecate the act.

You now are at liberty to shew this letter if you please with the others when I return you and myself will have an eclaircissement of the business and let me assure you, that if the publick can repose confidence in you I never can.

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I am Sr Yr Mo ob Servt